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Working Paper PMTA 79-1

Follow-Up of the Ft. Benning Field Tryout of the
Officer Career Information and Planning System (OCIPS)

Laurel W. Oliver

The views, opinions, and/or findings contained in this report are those of the author and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy, or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation.

U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

April 1979

FOREWORD

Research done in the Career Development and Soldier Productivity Technical Area of the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) supports the Army's manpower development in both officer and enlisted forces. In 1971 the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) requested support from ARI to deal with issues in implementing the newly organized Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS). One facet of this request dealt with developing an acceptable and useful career information system to meet the expressed needs of the officers and career managers. Research Problem Review 77-14 gave the results of preliminary development in terms of a field tryout of the first units of ARI's resulting computer-aided Officer Career Information and Planning System (OCIPS). The present Research Problem Review presents the results of a follow-up study on the participants of the OCIPS field tryout.

The research is responsive to the requirements of the DCSPER; it was accomplished under Army Project 2Q762717A766, FY 78.

JOSEPH ZEIDNER
Technical Director

BRIEF

Requirement:

To assess the effect of a field tryout of the Officer Career Information and Planning System (OCIPS) on officers who participated in the field tryout.

Procedure:

A follow-up questionnaire was mailed to field tryout participants five months after the tryout. Fourteen lieutenants and 20 captains completed and returned the questionnaire within five weeks.

Findings:

Both lieutenants and captains continued to rate the computer highly as a useful mode of transmitting career information, and large numbers of both groups reported needing a moderate or a lot of career information. Lieutenants rated the computer mode more highly, expressed a greater need for career information, and sought career information to a greater extent than did captains. Responses to open-ended questions indicated dissatisfaction with the present system of obtaining career information and also elicited a number of officer suggestions concerning career progression.

Utilization of Findings:

Continued research on OCIPS and on alternate methods of providing career information to Army Officers is indicated.

FOLLOW-UP OF THE FT. BENNING FIELD TRYOUT OF THE OFFICER
CAREER INFORMATION AND PLANNING SYSTEM (OCIPS)

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Follow-up of the Ft. Benning Field Tryout of the Officer Career Information and Planning Systems (OCIPS)

As part of a broad research effort on Army officer career development, the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) has conducted research on a computer-aided Officer Information and Planning Systems (OCIPS). The background of this research and a description of a field tryout of three modules of interactive dialogue are contained in Oliver and Day (1977). A general description of the broad program of which this research is a part can be found in Cory, Medland, and Uhlaner (1977).

In brief, the field tryout demonstrated the feasibility and the acceptability of OCIPS. Confirming previous research, officers reported a need for a considerable amount of career information and rated current sources as marginally useful. Officers using OCIPS found the three modules interesting, useful, understandable, and accurate. Officers in the field tryout also gave highly favorable ratings on the use of the computer as a mode of presenting career information. The evaluation measures employed in the field tryout were self-report questionnaires (administered as a pretest and an immediate posttest) and posttest interviews.

Unanswered by the field tryout research, however, was the question of the extent to which use of OCIPS would have an impact over a period of time. More specifically, we wished to know the degree to which OCIPS had affected the attitudes, cognitions, and behavior of the field tryout participants approximately five months after their exposure to the computer-based career information and planning system. It was anticipated that the findings of the field tryout, which measured the immediate impact of OCIPS, and the results of this follow-up investigation, which assessed longer-term outcomes, would provide data to help plan future research on OCIPS.

In assessing the impact of OCIPS five months after use, it was of interest to know whether or not the attitudes and cognitions of the officers differed significantly from immediate posttest to delayed posttest. In addition, the attitudes and cognitions of the lieutenants and captains were compared on the same measures at the two points in time (at immediate posttest and at delayed posttest). A comparison was also made between lieutenants and captains of the degree to which they had engaged in career information-seeking behavior during the five-month period between the immediate and delayed posttests.

Method

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 34 Army officers who had participated in the field tryout of OCIPS at Ft. Benning during a three-week period during October and November of 1976. A breakdown of the total sample is given below:

	<u>Infantry</u>	<u>Non-Infantry</u>	<u>Total</u>
Lieutenants	5	9	14
Captains	17	3	20
Total	22	12	34

Most of the respondents (65%) were Infantry officers. Of the remaining subjects: four were in the Audio-Visual Instructional Technology specialty; two in Combat Communications-Electronics; and one each in Armor, Air Defense Artillery, Engineer, Fixed Telecommunications Systems, Personnel Management, and Communication-Electronics Materiel Management.

Although several women were in the field tryout sample, it is not known how many females responded to the follow-up questionnaires since subjects were not asked to indicate their sex on the instrument used in the delayed posttest.

Instrument

Appendix A contains the follow-up questionnaire used in the delayed posttest. The questionnaire requested demographic information (the officer's grade and specialty) and contained items which assessed officer attitudes (ratings of the usefulness of a computer-based career information system), cognitions (perceived need for additional career information), and behavior (self-report of the variety and frequency of career information-seeking). In addition, the questionnaire contained some open-ended questions which tapped officer opinions and feelings about the effect of OCIPS and changes the officer would like to see with respect to career information and planning for officers. The items concerning attitudes and cognitions were identical to items on the questionnaire used in the immediate posttest. The item concerning career information-seeking behavior and the open-ended questions were included only in the delayed posttest.

Procedure

During the OCIPS field tryout at Ft. Benning, participants were asked if they would be willing to be contacted by mail in 60 to 90 days to fill out a short questionnaire. All subjects who were asked agreed to this request, but the experimenters forgot to query four officers about their willingness to participate in a follow-up. Subjects were provided

with envelopes on which they wrote their names and addresses. These envelopes were used to mail the follow-up questionnaire approximately five months after the conclusion of the Ft. Benning field tryout. The questionnaire (see Appendix A), a cover letter requesting the subject's cooperation in completing the instrument (see Appendix B), and a return envelope were mailed to the subjects in the envelopes which they had previously addressed to themselves. Questionnaires received within five weeks of the mailing date were used.

Thirty-four or 70% of the follow-up questionnaires were returned by the data collection cut-off date. One envelope could not be delivered because of a wrong address, five questionnaires were returned after the cut-off date, and one questionnaire which was completed by a major was not included in the analysis. Thus, 40 (83%) of 48 delivered questionnaires could be accounted for.

Design and Analysis

Independent variables. The independent variables were time and grade. There were two levels of time: immediate posttest and delayed posttest. The two levels of grade were lieutenant and captain. Comparisons were made over time and between grades.

Dependent variables. Questionnaire items constituted the dependent variables for this research. Three items of the delayed posttest assessed attitudes toward a computer-based system by asking the subject to rate (on a five-point scale) the usefulness of a computer-based system for information on long-term career planning, the structure of careers in the Army, and the designation of an alternate specialty.

Three items measured cognitions concerning the subject's perceived need for career information by asking the respondent to indicate (on a four-point scale) how much additional information he or she needed on long-term career planning, the structure of careers in the Army, and the designation of an alternate specialty.

Another item on the delayed posttest questionnaire elicited a self-report of the subject's career information-seeking behavior. Two aspects of such behavior were assessed--variety (the number of different sources of career information the respondent had contacted) and frequency (the number of times the respondent consulted a source of career information).

Statistical analysis. The major comparison of interest in this research was the comparison of the subjects' attitudes toward the use of the computer and their perceptions of the need for additional career information from the immediate posttest to the delayed posttest. Another focus of the research was on the comparison of lieutenants and captains on these dependent variables at each of the two points in time. These two comparisons were accomplished by means of an analysis of variance.

The preferred statistical treatment would have been a repeated measures analysis of variance; but it was not possible to match the respondents on the immediate posttest with respondents on the delayed posttest. Accordingly, a two-way analysis of variance was employed in which the groups are considered independent with no allowance made for repeated measures.

In addition, analyses were made of the two career information-seeking behaviors. The mean scores of the lieutenants and captains on variety and frequency of career information-seeking were compared using the t test for independent groups. Although the t test for correlated observations would have been preferred, it was not possible to identify respondents at the two points in time. Hence, the more conservative test was employed.

Results

Table 1 contains the means and standard deviations of officer ratings on variables concerning the usefulness of a computer-based system and the need for additional career information. Table 2 summarizes the results of the analysis of variance conducted on each of these six variables. Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations, and t tables for the two career information-seeking variables. Other quantitative results are contained in Appendix C: frequency data for officer ratings of the usefulness of the computer at delayed posttest are presented in Table C-1, and frequency data for officer ratings of the need for additional career information are given in Table C-2.¹ Appendix D contains officer responses to the three open-ended items on the follow-up questionnaire.

Insert Table 1 about here

Analysis of Variance Results for Variables Involving Attitudes and Cognitions

Table 1 shows means and standard deviations of the six dependent variables measured at both immediate posttest and at delayed posttest

Insert Table 2 about here

for both lieutenants and captains, and Table 2 summarizes the analysis of variance results for these variables. In none of the six analyses was the main effect for time significant. Thus, there was no significant change in officer ratings from immediate posttest to delayed posttest.

¹Frequency data for immediate posttest data have been reported in: Oliver, L. W., & Day, R. W. Field tryout of Army Officer Career Information and Planning System. ARI Research Problem Review 77-14, U. S. Army Research Institute, December, 1977.

(Publication will fix this)

Results

Table 1 contains the means and standard deviations of officer ratings on variables concerning the usefulness of a computer-based system and the need for additional career information. Table 2 summarizes the results of the analysis of variance conducted on each of these six variables. Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations, and *t* values for the two career information-seeking variables. Other quantitative results are contained in Appendix C: frequency data for officer ratings of the usefulness of the computer at delayed posttest are presented in Table C-1, and frequency data for officer ratings of the need for additional career information are given in Table C-2.¹ Appendix D contains officer responses to the three open-ended items on the follow-up questionnaire.

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The main effect for grade was significant in three analyses. In comparison to captains, lieutenants gave significantly higher ratings to: the usefulness of a computer-based system for long-term career planning ($F = 15.56$, $df = 1/81$, $p < .001$), the usefulness of a computer-based system for information on the Army career structure ($F = 9.27$, $df = 1/81$, $p < .01$), and the need for additional information on alternate specialties ($F = 4.14$, $df = 1/78$, $p < .05$). An examination of the means in Table 1 shows that the mean ratings of lieutenants were higher than those of captains. Hence these significant main effects for grade demonstrated that lieutenants' attitudes were more favorable to the use of a computer-based system for information on long-term career planning and on the Army career structure. Lieutenants also perceived a significantly greater need for information on alternate specialties than did captains.

¹Frequency data for immediate posttest data have been reported in: Oliver, L. W., & Day, R. W. Field tryout of Army Officer Career Information and Planning System. ARI Research Problem Review 77-14. Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, December 1977.

Results of t Test for Career Information-seeking Behaviors

Table 3 contains means, standard deviations, and t values for the comparisons of lieutenants and captains on variety and frequency of

Insert Table 3 about here

career information-seeking. The mean number of sources of career information (variety) was 2.8 for lieutenants and 2.2 for captains. The means of the two groups of officers did not differ significantly ($t = 1.38$, $df = 32$, $p > .05$). The mean number of times a source of career information was contacted (frequency) was 5.7 for lieutenants and 3.9 for captains. Again, the means of the two groups did not differ significantly ($t = 1.27$, $df = 32$, $p > .05$). Thus, although lieutenants scored higher on both measures of career information-seeking, their mean scores did not differ reliably from those of the captains.

Other Measures

In addition to the dependent variables discussed above, additional data were collected in the delayed posttest. The responses to the open-ended questionnaire items are discussed below.

Effect of exposure to OCIPS on officers' thinking and planning with respect to their Army careers. A verbatim transcript of the subjects' responses to item 14 of the delayed posttest questionnaire is contained in Appendix D. Although the responses of lieutenants and captains are reported separately, the tenor of their comments did not seem to vary markedly, and a summary of the responses for the entire group follows.

Almost all of the officers felt that their exposure to OCIPS had been beneficial, and none of the subjects reported detrimental effects. A few said their exposure to the computer-based system had had little effect, with two (both captains) explaining that they were already highly committed to an Army career before experiencing OCIPS. The module on alternate specialty designation was singled out for special commendation by a number of subjects. The officers appeared to respond very positively to hard facts and detailed information. Several people mentioned the helpfulness of OCIPS information in planning their careers, and one person said the system made him or her realize how much information is needed to plan an Army career.

Also mentioned was the fact that OCIPS was in an early stage of development, with one individual believing it had been brought to the field too early. Another subject approvingly reported learning that "the Army is taking steps to help their (sic) officers progress correctly."

Changes officers would like to see in the general area of career information and planning for Army officers. Appendix D also contains all responses made by the subjects to item 15 of the questionnaire used in the delayed posttest. The theme running throughout the responses of both lieutenants and captains seemed to be the need for career information. Various recommendations were made. Among the suggestions were: periodic reports to officers, a sponsor-type program by career consultants, a centralized source of career information, expanded use of "pamphlets and audio-visual media," and a manual containing the questions most frequently asked about Army careers. Some subjects stressed the need for "greater interest and emphasis on career planning" at the junior officer level. One captain suggested that every battalion commander "should ensure that all of his officers have a copy of DA Pam 600-3 and should conduct officer calls with appropriate subject matter experts as speakers to ensure that his officers have the most complete and current information available."

Officers also mentioned the factual, unbiased nature of a computer-based system and its freedom from the vagaries of human interactions. In contrast, it was evident from responses that some officers had had very unsatisfactory experiences with the present system.

Additional comments and suggestions. The verbatim responses to the section of the questionnaire requesting additional comments and suggestions can also be found in Appendix D. Some of the responses to this item were similar to responses elicited by items 14 and 15. Officers mentioned topics such as their perceived misutilization of officers, advantages of a computer-based system, the need for career information, and the importance of DA Pamphlet 600-3 (having a copy and the need for updating). One captain suggested, in some detail, a procedure to replace the "nomination-type" system now in effect for positions requiring special qualifications. Another captain expressed concern that some of the best officers were leaving the Army and called on the Army to investigate the situation.

Discussion

Limitations of Research

The findings of this research are based on a small number of officers whose characteristics are largely unknown. For example, it is assumed that some of the officers were female, but the proportion of female officers is not known since the follow-up questionnaires were anonymous. Three-fourths of the 20 captains were Infantry officers, but only about a third (five of 14 respondents) of the lieutenants were Infantry officers. Thus, this sample cannot be considered representative either of Army officers in general or of a subgroup such as Infantry.

Given the limitations of the small sample and its lack of representativeness, the findings of this research are of interest because they confirm previous research and suggest directions for future research on OCIPS.

Conclusions

Changes from immediate posttest to delayed posttest. The major research question of interest concerned the degree to which the attitudes and cognitions of lieutenants and captains changed from the immediate posttest to the delayed posttest. The results reported above revealed that there were no significant changes over time by either lieutenants or captains on their ratings of the usefulness of the computer or of their need for career information. For both lieutenants and captains, then, it can be concluded that their attitudes toward the usefulness of the computer-based system remained highly positive over the five-month time period. It can also be concluded that both groups demonstrated a continued need for additional career information over the five-month time period.

Comparisons of lieutenants and captains. On all eight variables (attitudes, cognitions, and behaviors), lieutenants had higher mean scores than did captains. Three of these differences were significant. Thus, there appeared to be a tendency for lieutenants both to need and to seek career information to a greater extent than captains and to be more favorable to the mode (here, a computer-based system) which provided it. Since lieutenants have not been in the Army as long as the captains, it would seem reasonable that these younger officers would not have acquired as much career information and would therefore have a greater need for such information.

Responses to open-ended questionnaire items. All responses to the open-ended questionnaire items are contained in Appendix D. No attempt was made to quantify these responses, and only a narrative summary was given in the Results section above. It should be noted, however, that the tenor of these responses reflected the findings of previous research--e.g., that reported by Macpherson, Eastman, and Yates (1978) and of other investigations cited by Macpherson et al.

Both lieutenants and captains seemed to have engaged in a moderate amount of career information-seeking during the five-month period which elapsed between the two posttests. Since no measure of career information-seeking was obtained on a control group, however, it cannot be determined to what extent this level of information-seeking differed from that of a similar group which had not been exposed to OCIPS. Comments from the open-ended questions revealed that some officers had been markedly sensitized to the need for career information and career planning. It is possible, then, that this heightened awareness resulting from exposure to OCIPS may have brought about increased career information-seeking by certain individuals.

Implications for Future Research

Research design. It is clear that company grade officers feel that they need career information and consider OCIPS a feasible means of acquiring the needed information. Future research on OCIPS should be designed to measure the effect of using OCIPS. The recommendations made by Oliver (1978) for career counseling outcome researchers may be helpful here. The suggestions made below have been specifically indicated by the results of the current research on OCIPS.

There is, for example, a need for a comparison group. Although officers who had used OCIPS seemed to have engaged in a considerable amount of career information-seeking, there was no comparable group measured and followed which had not been exposed to OCIPS. Ideally, the comparison group is a control group to which subjects are randomly assigned. In actual practice, however, random assignment may not be administratively feasible. For example, the comparison group may have to be an intact group, such as an Officer Basic Course (OBC) class, or a wait-control² group whose composition is determined by Army requirements rather than by randomization. In any event, it would be important to obtain a group as similar to the experimental group as possible for comparison purposes.

Another implication for future research is the desirability of using other criteria to supplement the self-report measures used in the current research. Even the behavioral measure of career information-seeking used here was based on self-report. A good supplemental criterion would be an unobtrusive behavioral measure such as the number of contacts the subject makes during a given period of time with assignment officers and professional development officers at MILPERCEN. Another criterion might be a comparison of the estimated cost of OCIPS with that of the current procedures for obtaining career information, with cost considered not only in dollars but also in terms of officer performance and retention.

²A wait-control group is one tested at the same time as the experimental group but which does not receive the treatment (in this case, exposure to OCIPS) until the conclusion of the treatment for the experimental group.

In addition to using comparison groups and supplemental criteria, the composition of the sample should be carefully considered. In the current research, for example, gender was not taken into account. And it may be that the need for career-related information is different for female officers than it is for male officers. In certain specialties--e.g., Infantry--there are no women. A sample of officers from a "mix" of specialties would be another possibility, but the difficulty of providing terminals and research personnel in several places during an experiment might preclude the use of subjects representing a variety of specialties. In any event, the available options should be considered and the respective trade-offs examined.

Research on alternative modes of providing career information.
Findings of this follow-up research have confirmed the findings of previous research that many Army officers perceive a strong need for career information and find current sources of such information deficient. This inadequacy of career information sources may lead not only to dissatisfaction among officers but also to a less efficient match of officers and jobs. An improvement in the existing system for delivering career information to officers might therefore further the implementation of career goals as outlined in Army Pamphlet 600-3 (Department of the Army, 1977). Thus, alternative modes of transmitting career information to officers should be explored. A computer-based system such as OCIPS is an alternative which has been shown to be useful and acceptable to a sample of officers, but other feasible options also exist. A cost benefit study will be reported in the near future which will evaluate the estimated costs and advantages of alternative methods of providing career information to Army Officers. These various alternatives involve different degrees of reliance on a computer. Also in process and soon to be released is a report describing the system content developed thus far for OCIPS.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to investigate the degree to which the Officer Career Information and Planning System (OCIPS) had affected the attitudes, cognitions, and behavior of officers who had participated in a field tryout of OCIPS five months earlier. A follow-up questionnaire was returned by 14 lieutenants and 20 captains. Neither lieutenants nor captains demonstrated any significant changes in their ratings of the usefulness of a computer-based system for providing career information or of their perceived need for career information. Both groups of officers continued to rate the computer highly as a useful mode of transmitting career information, and large numbers of both groups reported needing a moderate or a lot of career information. Lieutenants rated the computer mode more highly, expressed a

greater need for career information, and sought career information to a greater extent than did captains, although only three of eight differences tested attained statistical significance. Responses to the open-ended questions indicated dissatisfaction with the present system of obtaining career information. The open-ended items also elicited a number of officer suggestions concerning career progression. Implications of this investigation for future research are discussed in terms of research methodology and alternative modes of providing career information.

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Officer Ratings on
Immediate Posttest and Delayed Posttest

Variable	Ratings			
	Lieutenants		Captains	
	Immediate Posttest (n=24)	Delayed Posttest (n=14)	Immediate Posttest (n=28)	Delayed Posttest (n=20)
Usefulness of a computer-based system for information on: ^a				
Long-term career planning	M 4.6	4.4	3.7	4.0
	SD .50	.63	1.0	1.0
Army career structure	M 4.7	4.5	4.0	4.1
	SD .48	.52	1.1	1.0
Alternate specialties	M 4.5	4.5	4.4	4.2
	SD .66	.52	.73	.88
Need for additional information on: ^b				
Long-term career planning	M 3.1	3.3	3.0	2.7
	SD .89	.86	1.1	1.2
Army career structure	M 2.7	3.1	2.5	2.5
	SD 1.0	.95	1.0	1.0
Alternate specialties	M 2.8	3.3	2.5	2.6
	SD 1.0	1.0	.85	1.2

^aRatings made on 5-point scale, where 5 = very useful.

^bRatings made on 4-point scale, where 4 = greatest need.

Table 2

Summary of F Tests Resulting from
Two-Way Analysis of Variance

Variable	F Ratio		
	Time (IP - DP)	Grade (LTS -CPTS)	Interaction (Grade x Time)
Usefulness of a computer-based system for information on:			
Long-term career planning	< 1.00	15.56***	1.93
Army career structure	< 1.00	9.27**	<1.00
Alternate specialties	<1.00	2.87	<1.00
Need for additional information on:			
Long-term career planning	< 1.00	1.52	1.01
Army career structure	<1.00	1.72	<1.00
Alternate specialties	1.45	4.14*	<1.00

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

Table 3

Comparison of Lieutenants and Captains on Career
Information-Seeking Behavior at Delayed Posttest

Groups	N	Career information-seeking behavior						
		M	Variety SD	<u>t</u>		M	Frequency SD	<u>t</u>
Lieutenants	14	2.8	1.12	1.38	(n.s.)	5.7	4.87	1.27 (n.s.)
Captains	20	2.2	1.28			3.9	2.98	

APPENDIX A

**ARMY OFFICER CAREER INFORMATION
AND PLANNING SYSTEM
FOLLOW-UP**

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

PT 5148e

ARMY OFFICER CAREER INFORMATION & PLANNING SYSTEM - FOLLOW-UP

1. If you remember the code you used when you helped us try out the Army Officer Career Information and Planning System at Ft. Benning last fall, please indicate it below:

2. What is your grade?

_____ 2LT _____ 1LT _____ CPT _____ MAJ

3. What is your primary specialty?

4. I am certain of my career goals--i.e., I feel that I know exactly what I want from my career.

_____ Strongly agree
_____ Agree
_____ Undecided
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly disagree

5. Which of the following best describes your plans for making the Army a career for twenty or more years?

_____ DEFINITELY will seek a career in the Army
_____ PROBABLY will seek a career in the Army
_____ UNDECIDED about a career in the Army
_____ PROBABLY will NOT seek a career in the Army
_____ DEFINITELY will NOT seek a career in the Army

Additional Career Information

9. Indicate below the degree to which you feel the need at this time for additional information on long-term career planning.

- ☐ I need no additional information.
- ☐ I need a little more additional information.
- ☐ I need a moderate amount of additional information.
- ☐ I need a lot of additional information.
- ☐ I don't know how much additional information I need.

10. Indicate below the degree to which you feel the need for additional information on the structure of careers in the Army:

- ☐ I need no additional information.
- ☐ I need a little more additional information.
- ☐ I need a moderate amount of additional information.
- ☐ I need a lot of additional information.
- ☐ I don't know how much additional information I need.

11. Indicate below the degree to which you feel the need for additional information on the designation of an alternate specialty:

- ☐ I need no additional information
- ☐ I need a little more additional information.
- ☐ I need a moderate amount of additional information.
- ☐ I need a lot of additional information.
- ☐ I don't know how much additional information I need.

13. Please tell us what effect, if any, you feel your exposure to the computer-based Army Officer Career Information and Planning System has had on your thinking and planning with respect to an Army career.

14. What change(s) would you like to see in the general area of career information and planning for Army officers?

Additional comments and suggestions:

15. Today's date _____



PERI-IS

APPENDIX B

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

U.S. ARMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
1300 WILSON BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22209

7 March 1977

Research is being conducted by the Army Research Institute on a computer-based career information and planning system intended to supplement the present procedures for informing officers about their Army careers. Last fall, you helped us in a field tryout of this system and indicated your willingness to participate in a mail follow-up.

We would appreciate your taking the time to complete the inclosed questionnaire and returning it to us in the envelope provided for this purpose. We have tried to keep the form short and, insofar as possible, in a checklist format.

Your cooperation in this research effort is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "W. C. Maus".

2 Incl
As stated

W. C. MAUS
COL, GS
Commander

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

Table C-1

Frequencies and Percentages of Officer Ratings of Usefulness of
Computer-Based System on Delayed Posttest

Variable	Number of Ratings	
	Lieutenants (n = 14)	Captains (n = 20)
Usefulness for information on long-term career planning:		
Very useful or useful	13 (93%)	17 (85%)
Undecided	0	1 (5%)
Not very useful or not at all useful	1 (7%)	2 (10%)
Usefulness for information on the Army career structure:		
Very useful or useful	14 (100%)	18 (90%)
Undecided	0	0
Not very useful or not at all useful	0	2 (10%)
Usefulness for information on alternate specialties:		
Very useful or useful	14 (100%)	19 (95%)
Undecided	0	0
Not very useful or not at all useful	0	1 (5%)

Table C-2

Frequencies and Percentages of Officer Ratings
of Need for Additional Career Information
on Delayed Posttest

Variable	Number of Ratings	
	Lieutenants (n = 14)	Captains (n = 20)
Need for information on long-term career planning:		
Need no information	0	5 (25%)
Need a little information	3 (23%)	2 (10%)
Need a moderate amount of information	3 (23%)	7 (35%)
Need a lot of information	7 (54%)	6 (30%)
Need for information on the Army career structure:		
Need no information	0	4 (20%)
Need a little information	5 (38%)	5 (25%)
Need a moderate amount of information	2 (15%)	8 (40%)
Need a lot of information	6 (46%)	3 (15%)
Need for information on alternate specialties:		
Need no information	1 (7%)	5 (25%)
Need a little information	3 (21%)	5 (25%)
Need a moderate amount of information	2 (4%)	4 (20%)
Need a lot of information	8 (57%)	6 (30%)

^aOne respondent, who replied "not sure" to this item, has been omitted from the analysis.

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPT OF OFFICER RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

Item 13 - Effect exposure to OCIPS had on officer's thinking and planning with respect to an Army career

Lieutenants' Responses

Until my career was shortened by an accident, I felt that your system was and still is sufficiently purposeful in its conception and entirety for the utilization of the officer corps in selecting primary and alternate career patterns.

It has helped me realize how much information is necessary to plan an Army career.

It has brought out a new awareness of my career development. Given me extra incentive and direction as far as how to turn unproductive assignments into another step toward promotion and knowledge.

It pointed out to me the need to start planning ahead as well as introduced to me the course of action I need to take.

It was useful in providing an overall view of what types of assignments to expect throughout the course of a military career.

Little, but helpful.

Little effect.

Provides facts and information as to my chances of getting what I wanted, also provided a list of opportunities related to my interests. This information was paramount in placing my priorities of secondary skill selection.

I feel it is a good idea but at present is still in the baby stage. The survey should not have taken place until it was at least programmed properly and with all information.

It helped me with the planning of my alternate specialty (42--Information) selection. I was provided the basic facts without having to "weed through" books and people's "war stories" of their career experience.

It has made me more aware of alternate specialties and has also made me aware that the Army is taking steps to help their officers progress correctly or just informing them better.

I felt that it was very informative and helpful in my search for facts and figures on a possible career in the information field. The picture seemed to be very promising for my chances of getting into this field, based upon my college background and primary MOS.

Captains' Responses

Increased my knowledge on the alternate specialty program.

The computer-based system gave me a better idea of how the alternate specialty is selected. It also enlightened me as to possible assignments in various career fields.

Hardly any--my career is dependent upon successful command--no thoughts of future until that time.

After my brief exposure to the system via "question & answer," I determined that openings in my choice of an alternate specialty were present, that I could pursue this alternate specialty with a good chance of obtaining it, and I got a look at current statistics relevant to Army officers who would be interested in the pursuit of this specialty field.

None. The statistical information re: alternate specialties was interesting but not important.

Very little effect--an interesting concept, but its oversimplification negates its value. I believe the system of career development is in need of an overhaul, and that generalized information is worse than useless.

Computer based system is of no value whatsoever to the service, since the variable number of questions from the field is infinite.

Detailed information regarding primary and secondary specialties is most informative and beneficial. Information about overall career planning is useful to junior grade officers such as Lieutenants and Junior Captains, but is less useful for those officers with more experience.

Very little. My commitment to Army career was made well in advance of participation in this project.

My plans for a career were definite prior to my exposure. It did provide vast information as to how the system works and especially alternate specialties.

The statistics on numbers of officers in each specialty was helpful. As many changes in requirements as there are in Army needs, however, any long-term planning can prove fruitless.

I found out what the qualifications were for some of the others in my secondary specialty.

Increased my interest.

Approximately one month after using the computer I was contacted to put in the preference statement for ~~my~~ alternate specialty. The information I received by using the system was particularly helpful in making my selections. I feel that it has also been of assistance in personally planning my career..

It has shown me, to some extent, the background necessary for my desired alternate specialty.

It would not affect my career since I've over 18 years service, however, the computer-based Army Officer Career Information and Planning System should be presented to the young officer (within his first five years) to enable him to provide input that will help in his career management.

Item 14 - Changes officer would like to see in general area of career information and planning for Army officers.

Lieutenants' Responses

A "sponsor-type" program initiated by career consultants with frequent and continued contact between junior officers and consultants regarding assignment by assignment advice and assistance.

Assignment sequences and by post. Timetable planning by year and assignment. A percentage breakdown of alternate specialties to enable officers to choose their assignments and specialties with the knowledge of field opportunities.

I feel that young officers should be provided with more career information as soon as possible in order for them to make a firm decision about their future.

The computer-based Army officer career information and planning system needs to be put into operation.

Expanded use of pamphlets and audio-visual media where a person can consider a career privately as contrasted with a lecture presentation where one would hesitate to ask personal questions in public or of a senior officer.

Expected manpower and specialty needs of the Army, projected for 5 years.

Centralized information source.

A specific system designated to compensate for biases created by a human assignments officer. Also, using manpower more wisely by employing a person by experience--and needs of the Army. Sometimes there is no excuse when the above are the same.

I think the computer system on a volunteer basis provides the most up to date, unbiased, and economical source of information available.

I would like to see in plain everyday written English, a manual that answers the most often asked questions on careers in the Army. This manual would also include address and phone of a knowledgeable person to consult. I would also like to see people from assignments and career development who don't lie.

I'm not a believer in the "ticket-punching" routine. If I'm fully trained (and have proven competent in a particular specialty), it doesn't make sense to place me in an occupation requiring time and

dollars to train me again. More emphasis should be placed on proper utilization of trained personnel.

I think that an officer, when they come down on orders, should be given an opportunity to discuss personally or on the phone where he'd like to go and possibly what kind of job he is going to. I know this is done to an extent but so many things change. I think the junior officers should be given a say in what they want their career pattern to look like.

I would appreciate a guide for officers to follow when trying to get into a particular career specialty. For example, it seems there is a shortage of information officers, yet my branch can't seem to tell me exactly how to get into that field except through assignment in an Information slot (which they can't or won't give me). There must be a better route to take.

Captains' Responses

Periodic reports made available to officers and containing information on present alternate specialty "tracks." Also include present trends in career progression patterns.

The computer-based system is an excellent tool for the young Army officers. It contains so much more useful information on career planning than any manual I have ever read. It should be available to all lieutenants and young captains prior to attendance at an advance course.

Gear program towards captains who have "punched their card."

Broader scope (more careers with statistics covering a longer time span in years). More opportunities to consult computerized career information centers to get the above data. More information relevant to planning my career by a grade or rank structure breakdown.

There is a need for a much greater interest and emphasis on career-planning for the junior officer by field commanders particularly at the battalion level. Every battalion commander should ensure that all of his officers have a copy of DA Pam 600-3 and should conduct officer calls with appropriate subject matter experts as speakers to ensure that his officers have the most complete and current information available.

Early dissemination through the chain of command.

Projected assignments and "Branch Desirable" assignments in both Primary and Secondary Specialties according to grade and time in grade.

In an environment where perfection (on the OER) is commonplace, career development reverts to winning the confidence of men in power--by face-to-face contact--and grooming yourself for a place in their area of responsibility. By merely doing your best at any assigned job, although virtuous, and taking career planning guidance from the present system (computer, DA Pam 600-3, branch rep., etc.), an officer will not stand out for the highly selective positions I consider career goals.

I believe more efforts should be made to acquaint junior officers with the specific duties likely to be performed in each of the alternate specialty fields. Perhaps the best time to make this effort would be during attendance at the branch advanced course. Senior officers who are actually assigned to alternate specialty positions could be used in a seminar or panel discussion format to describe the various positions and duties performed during his career in the area of his alternate specialty. I feel this approach is needed because DA Pam 600-3 is necessarily vague in its description of specific duties and representative assignments as they relate to each of the OPMS specialties.

I feel that different officers are better commanders, where some are better officer and planning personnel. This becomes better defined at field grade level but should start at the O3 level. Many careers are ruined for good officers by forcing them into an area they are not as good in just for the sake of a well rounded officer.

More information put out in visits by branch personnel.

Less arbitrary selection of secondary specialties.

I would like to see more up-to-date information supplied on the alternate specialties. I feel the system is excellent and would like to see it expanded. I'd also like to see DA Pam 600-3 reorganized in "layman's" terms.

Earlier designation of alternate specialties.

More consideration for keeping officers in an area which they desire and show an aptitude for that field such as keeping some with TOE units and others on staff.

Implementation of the computer-based system.

Realistic guidance and up-to-date factual, informative programs. More career periodicals and personal contact with DA representatives.

Additional Comments and Suggestions

Lieutenants' Responses

Please send me Army Pamphlet 600-3. Help me please, the bureaucracy is at times overwhelming.

I would like to see a change in policy as to where an officer can choose his secondary specialty with no restrictions.

Expand the programmed answers for the computer.

Misutilization is currently running rampant in the Army.

I would like to see the results of this survey and every assignment officer that is worthless moved.

It's comforting to know someone is taking an interest in this--please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Captains' Responses

With Army career fields constantly being reviewed and changed to meet the needs of the service, the computer-based system will give much more current information for career planning than a written regulation or manual.

Continue to keep DA Pam 600-3 current. I believe that DA Pam 600-3 is the most important source of career planning information.

The concept of a computer-based career information service is well overdue and could prove to be an immeasurable asset to career minded officers. As a minimum, a computer console located at each major headquarters and service schools would provide to be an unquestionable service to all officers, providing the information base is continually updated.

I believe the computer system as used during tests at Ft. Benning could become an invaluable management tool to major commanders in the field. I would like to see a program developed which could store certain qualification information on each officer in the major unit (i.e., division). Currently, if a division or brigade commander requires an officer for a position which requires special qualifications, he must normally depend

on a nomination-type system to identify candidates. This system allows "nominators" to abuse or pervert the system by deciding who will and who will not be considered for the position. With an effective computer-stored personnel information system, the major commander could enter the qualification required into the computer and receive a complete list of all individuals who meet the requirements. This guarantees that all required men are considered by the major commander and eliminates the "protective" screening which is potentially possible at lower and immediate command levels.

The Army had better wake up and find out why so many of my peers in rank and time in the service are getting out of the service. We are losing some of our best officers and it will tell in a few years just as the all-volunteer Army vs. the draft is telling now in the enlisted ranks.

I feel there should be more Branch oriented information. The newsletters that used to be circulated were very informative.

More detailed information on secondary specialties.